



Sal y Juega.

Ponte las pilas.™

A Message for School and Community Leaders

As Parent Teacher Association organizers and community organization leaders, what you do every day helps develop healthy and happy children — and this commitment shows that you care about kids! By taking an interest in the future of young people, you do a lot to help students achieve their personal potential. To that end, there's one simple thing you can do that will promote physical health, strengthen academic and creative achievements, and foster personal awareness and social relationships among children — encourage physical activity!

To support this effort, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) created the **VERB™** campaign. The CDC has joined with Weekly Reader to create these valuable materials — **VERB™ Ponte las pilas.™ Sal y Juega.** — to help you motivate young people, especially children ages 9 to 13 ("tweens"), to be physically active on a daily basis.

This guide includes information for promoting physical activity in your community, and fun ways to provide young people with consistent, safe opportunities for physical activity. You'll also find 150 informative Spanish-language brochures to share with parents. And, the reproducible flyer on the back of this guide can be used repeatedly to announce physical activity programs and events.

Establishing regular athletic patterns among young people can result in short- and long-term health benefits. Physical fitness helps build healthy bones, maintain muscles and joints, control weight and can lessen the risk of high blood pressure. In addition, regular physical activity can help improve mood, relieve depression and increase feelings of well-being. Recent research has also shown a possible correlation between higher levels of fitness and higher academic achievement in reading and math.¹

Children should aim for at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, preferably every day², or for a minimum of five days a week. You play an integral role in helping make that goal a reality by providing safe settings and varied opportunities for kids to get — and stay — moving. Please share these materials with other members of your community to expand idea-sharing and opportunities for physical activity.

Inspire. Motivate. Cheer. It's what you do best!

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Tell us what you think about this program to help us prepare future free materials that best suit your needs! Please complete and return the enclosed feedback form and reply card.

Practices to Keep Kids Safely on the Go

- Produce an activity fair with representatives from area dance and martial arts studios, sports leagues, jump rope troupes, etc. Invite tween-age students and their parents to attend so they can choose activities for the upcoming season. Hold the activity fair before each school quarter/semester and summer.
- Map out neighborhood facilities that offer free physical activity options surrounding the school and communities. For example: parks, bike and walking trails, basketball courts, etc. Provide this reference to parents.
- Develop a supervision schedule with neighborhood parents. Each household takes turns watching a designated group of children play in the yard, at school, at the playground, etc. This allows flexibility with work schedules, and provides parents with a safe alternative for their children after school.
- Encourage your students to walk to school—every day. Coordinate parent supervision on a weekly schedule and assign students to groups of five.

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¹ "State Study Proves Physically Fit Kids Perform Better Academically." California Department of Education. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/news/releases2002/re137.asp>

² "Promoting Better Health for Young People Through Physical Activity and Sports." A Report to the President From the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Education, Fall 2000. http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/physicalactivity/promoting_health/pdfs/ppar.pdf (See *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, page 9)

VERB of the Month

Organize a VERB of the Month club for tweens. Get them excited about learning new sports and activities, spending time with friends and building skills. Here are event and theme ideas:

Run! Hold a “Jump-Start Jog” at a local track. To introduce fun ways to jog laps, have tweens jog the “straight-aways” of the lanes and then choose alternate activities to perform at each of the “turns” such as walking, skipping, hopping, tiptoeing, clapping over head and jumping rope. Raise money by asking friends and families to donate something for every lap kids pledge to run.

Tone! Sponsor a “Morning Muscle Tone” run each weekend at a local track or running spot. After the session, provide healthy refreshments for participants.

Skate! Host a “Skate Late” event for tweens to introduce inline skating and skateboarding, and what safety gear to wear.

Pitch! Promote a “Get Your Gloves Day!” and invite tweens and the community to learn pitching, catching and fielding tips using baseball and softball (not winter) gloves. Invite local college players to teach proper technique. Sustain this activity with regular games and workshops.

Swing! Plan a community dance called “Swing in the Spring” to have tweens and their family members enjoy the aerobic benefits of dance. Use this event to raise money for sports equipment. Or, hold an activity fair with all the different activities that include swing: baseball, softball, tennis, golf, dance, etc.

Dive! Plan a “Dive into Action” event for tweens at a local gym, high school, community college or other site that has a regulation-sized swimming pool. Teach kids diving techniques and positions, or dive into the fun of swimming or water polo.

Toss! Have a “Frisbee® Toss” be the center of your week! Play “Ultimate Frisbee,” which is like a football game where points are scored when Frisbees are caught beyond a goal line. Players can guard each other, but players cannot run with the disk. Or, play “Disk Golf” by tossing a disk in the least number of throws. Use targets like plastic garbage cans instead of “holes.” Ask a local sporting goods store if they’d like to donate Frisbees to get kids excited about this fun activity. Visit www.VERBnow.com to see how kids are getting more instructions on how to play Disk Golf.

Flip! Host a weekly “Hands and Feats” gymnastics club after school. To teach students how to perform specific flips and cartwheels, trace and number handprint and footprint positions on workout mats. Ask participants to follow these directions while you work with individuals.

calendar events and activities

Visit www.VERBparents.com and www.cdc.gov/VERB for additional ideas and information. To see what kids are up to, check out www.VERBnow.com.

JANUARY 7

This date in 1927, the Harlem Globetrotters played their first game in Illinois. Get tweens to play a game of high-energy basketball that includes unique ways of dribbling, passing and receiving. Invite local pro, semi-pro or college teams to hold workshops.

JANUARY 15

The first Super Bowl® was held on this day in 1967 between Green Bay and Kansas City. Host a game of co-ed touch football to commemorate this pastime. Invite parents to play, too.

FEBRUARY 4

National Girls and Women in Sports Day

Celebrate the presence of women in tennis by holding a “Tennis Time” event. Teach kids some basic moves and then have them practice with games of singles or doubles. For more ideas, visit www.womenssportsfoundation.org.

FEBRUARY 14

National Have-a-Heart Day

Get hearts pumping this Valentine’s Day. Plan a “Hoops for Heart” basketball event in your area to promote heart-healthy activities while supporting the American Heart Association. For details, visit www.americanheart.org/hoops.

FEBRUARY 29

Leap Day

The calendar year 2004 is a “leap year,” and February has a “leap day!” To celebrate this “Extra Day to VERB,” use hurdles, tires, hula hoops and other easy-to-acquire items to set up leaping, jumping and hopping obstacle course challenges for tweens to navigate.

MARCH 1–7

National Cheerleading Week

Invite groups of tweens to construct and develop cheer routines with a VERB theme. At the end of the week, hold an exhibition and invite families and friends to observe. For cheerleading tips, log on to www.cheerplace.com.

MARCH 2

National Sportsmanship Day

Issue an award to a tween who exhibits exemplary behavior while playing sports. For an added reward, include a modest gift certificate to a local sports store. For more ideas on how to participate in this day, visit www.sportsparenting.org.

APRIL

Walk America

Invite family and friends to participate in this month’s Walk America and support the March of Dimes. For up-to-date information and ways to organize a community walk, visit www.walkamerica.org.

APRIL

National Youth Sports Safety Month

Invite a coach, fitness expert or local professional athlete to educate kids about the safety concerns of popular sports, including safety rules and emergency procedures. Ask the guests to show examples of safety gear (i.e., helmets, wrist guards, etc.).

APRIL 6

First Modern Olympic® Games

Commemorate the very first modern Olympic Games, which opened on this date in 1896, by visiting a local track. Time kids as they run around the track and set up other Olympic stations, such as badminton, gymnastics, field hockey and volleyball.

APRIL 15

On this day in 1947, Jackie Robinson played at Ebbets Field in Brooklyn, NY and became the first African-American in the twentieth century to play baseball in the major leagues. To honor this “first,” create a “First-Timers Baseball Club” and invite tweens who have never played baseball or softball to learn all about the game.

MAY

National Physical Fitness and Sports Month

For suggested events and organizing tips, visit www.fitness.gov/getmovingamerica.html.

MAY

National Bike Month

Organize a “Weekend on Wheels” bicycle derby. First review the use of helmets and traffic rules, then start cycling. For more on biking tips and safety for kids, log on to www.bikeleague.org/educenter.

MAY 9–15

National Running and Fitness Week

Chart three running courses — short-, middle- and long-distance. Challenge students to run all three courses over the next three weeks, gradually increasing the distance and ending on the longest course. For more ideas, visit www.americanrunning.org.

MAY 24–31

Backyard Games Week

Host a “Badminton Bonanza.” Badminton, which became an Olympic® event in 1996, is considered the world’s fastest racquet sport. Invite students and family members to play and enjoy the day!

JUNE

Sports America Kids Month

Celebrate the start of summer by planning fun weekend outings and clinics at exciting sports venues, including golf courses, rock climbing gyms, outdoor nature sites and equestrian centers.

JUNE 8–14

National Youth Sport Coaches Week

Invite local coaches to speak with tweens about sports teams and clubs in your area. Provide handouts listing any summer sports opportunities, clubs and camps.

JUNE 14–20

National Little League® Baseball Week

For a fun theme, “pitch” this idea: play a “Backwards Baseball” game! Ask “hitters” to stand on the pitcher’s mound and “runners” to run bases in the opposite direction!

JULY 28–AUGUST 12

Twenty years ago, Greg Louganis won two gold medals in platform and springboard diving during the 1984 Summer Olympics® in Los Angeles. At a local swimming pool with lifeguards present, invite tweens to dive in and see what all the fun’s about.

AUGUST

National Inventors’ Month

Make “Inventing Fun” your theme for the month. Challenge families to be creative and invent their own games to get moving. Then hold an “Inventors’ Fair” at the end of the month to try them all out.

VERB Time!

Did you know that every day, from the hours of 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., it’s VERB Time? Although kids can be active anytime, anywhere, encourage them to participate in physical activity during these prime hours, when they could potentially be involved in unhealthy or risky behaviors. Do your best to help kids explore safe environments around them for participating in fun physical activities. See what kinds of ideas kids are getting at www.VERBnow.com.

* Disclaimer: The Web resources mentioned in this guide are provided solely as a service to our readers. These links do not constitute an endorsement of these organizations or their programs by CDC or the federal government, and none should be inferred. CDC is not responsible for the content of the individual organization Web pages found at these links.



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Hey kids, come join the fun at

(title of event)

sponsored by

(organization name)

featuring these VERBs

(physical activities that will be part of the fun)

Date: _____

Time: _____

Place: _____

For more information, contact:



Check out www.VERBnow.com for ideas and places to get moving every day of the year!